

## Abingdon Farmers Market, Abingdon, Virginia

Abingdon, Virginia is a town of approximately 8,000 in the southwest corner of Virginia, in the Appalachian region of the state. The Abingdon Farmers Market has been in existence for many years as an informal “tailgate” market. In 2002, with assistance from a local non-profit, Appalachian Sustainable Development, the market began to grow in terms of both vendors and customers.

Appalachian Sustainable Development works in the Appalachian region of Virginia and Tennessee and utilizes a hands-on, grassroots approach to building a healthier food and farming economy, including extensive outreach, education and training of

farmers. One of the key components of their sustainable agriculture strategy has been to enable limited resource farmers to farm sustainably and profitably, while reaching low income and working people with healthy food.



In August 2007, the town of Abingdon completed construction of the Abingdon Farmers Market Pavilion. The pavilion is an open shed type structure, with a roof, water and electricity. The market is open Tuesdays from 4pm to 7pm and Saturday mornings from 7am until noon. The market season is from April to November. The market is at capacity with 46 vendors. Market rules require that all products be raised or made by the vendor.

In July 2009, Abingdon Farmers Market became the first farmers market in the State of Virginia authorized to operate a SNAP EBT scrip program. The market received funding from Appalachian Sustainable Development to purchase a wireless point-of-sale (POS) device and the wooden tokens to operate the SNAP scrip program. Appalachian Sustainable Development received a grant from Wholesome Wave Inc. that allowed it to provide the funding to Abingdon Farmers Market to begin to accept SNAP EBT and to offer a Double Value Coupon Program.

At the end of the market season in November 2009, Abingdon Farmers Market had SNAP redemptions of \$1,281.00. This amount was matched dollar for dollar using the Double Value Coupon program for a total of \$2,562.00 in benefits issued.

Abingdon Farmers Market serves as a model for other farmers markets in Virginia that are interested in operating its own SNAP EBT scrip program.